

ACTION EUR-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AMAD-00	INL-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	OIG-00	PER-00	IRM-00
	TEST-00	BEG-00	R-00	DRL-00	SAS-00	/001W	
				-----482A56 301237Z /38			

P 301228Z JUL 04
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5855
OSD WASHDC PRIORITY
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS VIENNA 002756

DEPT FOR EUR/AGS, INR/EU, AND EUR/PPD FOR LISBETH KEEFE

OSD FOR COMMANDER CHAFFEE

WHITEHOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KPAO, AU, OPRC

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS: JULY 30, 2004

Healthcare an Issue for the Provinces

1. headlines ORF online news and reports that Austrian Minister for Healthcare Maria Rauch-Kallat has announced that Austria's provinces are to be given greater responsibility on healthcare. The Minister presented a "structural plan" for the nine provinces to be subdivided into 32 "regions" with a "specifically defined healthcare program." The provinces will be put in charge of making sure that healthcare is available in the regions as listed in the structural plan. Thus, the provinces would be required to expand and adapt existing medical care, ORF online says. Meanwhile, in an inspection report on the Vienna Regional Health Insurance Services (WGKK) commissioned by Rauch-Kallat, experts warn of a possible "financial collapse" of the WGKK by 2006 and repercussions for the entire Austrian healthcare system. The massive financial problems predicted by the experts could be caused by factors outside the WGKK's control, such as the high unemployment and sickness rates as well as company bankruptcies, says ORF online.

UNCLASSIFIED

SPOe to Endorse Ferrero

2. says semi-official daily "Wiener Zeitung" and reports - like all major Austrian media - that the Social Democrats have said that they will support Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who has been nominated by Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel as the country's candidate for the EU Commission. SPOe floor leader Josef Cap stated yesterday that "everything else would be undemocratic," writes the daily. Nevertheless, Ferrero-Waldner will have to face a hearing before the Parliamentary executive committee on August 11. At the hearing, Cap urged, the Foreign Minister should announce which of the EU Commission departments she will be in charge of. Otherwise, Cap argued, Schuessel would "create the impression that he is not interested in a strong Austrian position on the Commission."

Some of the Criticism Went a Little Too Far

3. On July 29, Austrian ORF radio's English language station FM4 aired an interview with outgoing US Embassy DCM A. Daniel Weygandt on his experiences in Austria. During the difficult time of the Iraq war, which caused many European allies to publicly criticize US policy, Weygandt was a visible spokesperson for his government, FM4 says, and asks how he has dealt with the vocal criticism over the past year and a half. The DCM stated that periods of strong criticism "is an experience that US diplomats have had before in Europe," as for example in connection with the Pershing missiles in the 1980s. "One does develop a certain detachment about these things," Weygandt explained. What was a little perplexing about the latest round of anti-Americanism, however, was that it "called into question American society and not just US policies." There is a lot of criticism of US policies in the US as well, with "an active debate about what the Bush administration has been doing," so "I don't think anyone has any problems with disagreement" over policy, Weygandt said. The criticism that Weygandt has heard this time, however, in his mind calls into question "how well Europeans really do understand the US, considering accusations from some that the US is a bigoted or militaristic society that does not share Europe's humanistic values." Weygandt emphasized that for him it was hard to understand "why some people felt that it was necessary not only to criticize policies, but the country" as a whole. The US, he added, has done a lot for Europe.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Weygandt added that he felt most Europeans are at least familiar with American society and that most Europeans like American culture, or find the country a pleasant place to spend their vacations at the very least. Some of the criticism, the DCM believes, went a little too far, and "the people who made that kind of criticism perhaps should ask themselves whether they did not go further than was absolutely necessary." Though glad to be going home after working abroad in various assignments for a long time, Weygandt maintains "Vienna is not the easiest city to leave," adding that he hopes to be able to come back to Vienna and "maintain some of the friendships that he has formed here."

----- Israeli Ambassador Not to Be Recalled -----

4. headlines mass-circulation daily "Kurier" and writes that Israel's Ambassador to Austria Avraham Toledo - contrary to earlier reports - will not be recalled this summer. Toledo has managed to get an interim injunction against the Israeli Foreign Ministry stating that Israel cannot dismiss him as Ambassador, nor nominate a successor for his post. The Israeli Foreign Ministry now says that Toledo will remain in Vienna until the end of his term. Rumors were floated in February that the Ambassador might have to return to Israel after allegations surfaced that he had beaten up his wife, the "Kurier" writes. Toledo, the former Israeli charg d'affaires had only been elevated to the rank of Ambassador in February 2004, after the normalization of relations between Austria and Israel. Bilateral relations between the two countries were strained following the entry of the FPÖ into the Austrian government in 2000.

----- Restore Trust and Credibility -----

5. All Austrian media continue to give prominent coverage to the Democratic National Convention in Boston, where Senator John Kerry formally accepted the Democratic Party's nomination on Thursday to run against George W. Bush in the November presidential elections. According to ORF online news, in his speech to the Convention Kerry underscored that he would "never mislead the nation into war." Should he be elected President the United States would "never go to war because it wants to," Kerry stressed, but "only because it has to." However, he would not hesitate to use force if necessary, ORF online quotes Kerry. He also underscored that

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

he would "restore trust and credibility" to the White House and make the US "admired and not feared" abroad. Furthermore, Kerry promised to lead strong alliances abroad, but was careful to add that he would never give any nation or international institution "a veto over America's national security." Austrian radio early morning news "Morgenjournal" also reports on Kerry's speech, quoting him as saying that he "defended this country as a young man, and I will defend it as President." In a speech unusually "loud" for Kerry and "portraying dynamism and aggressiveness," the radio comments, the Democratic candidate had some harsh criticism for the Bush administration. A well-received speech is being seen as vital for his chance of success against George W Bush. According to Austrian radio, the speech went down extremely well with delegates at the convention, and was watched live on US television by about 20 million people.

----- Key al Qaeda Suspect Arrested -----

6. Austrian media report that authorities in Pakistan have arrested a man suspected of involvement in the bombings of two US embassies in East Africa in 1998 that killed more than two hundred people. Centrist daily "Die Presse" writes that the man has been identified as Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, an al Qaeda militant who has a 25 million dollar American bounty on his head. He was indicted in the United States and placed on the FBI's list of "most wanted terrorists." The daily adds that Pakistan's Interior Minister Faisal Saleh Hayad said that the Tanzanian was captured during a raid near the capital Islamabad on Sunday.

----- Powell Visits Iraq -----

7. ORF online news reports that US Secretary of State Colin Powell arrived in Baghdad today. As always with trips of US politicians to Iraq, the visit was not previously announced for security reasons, ORF online adds. Meanwhile, US President George W. Bush has lifted US sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990, stressing that with the removal of Saddam Hussein from power, and because of "other developments," such measures are no longer necessary. Semi-official daily "Wiener Zeitung" writes that a major conference on Iraq's political future that was scheduled in the capital Baghdad this weekend, has been postponed for at least two weeks. This move came at the request of the United Nations, the

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

daily adds and comments that thus, the process of democratization in Iraq has come to a halt.

US Pushing Sudan Resolution

8. According to Austrian radio, the United States has scheduled a vote at the United Nations later today on its resolution threatening sanctions against Sudan, if it does not stop atrocities in Darfur. The Americans re-worded the draft text to rally support for pressure on the Sudanese government that has been accused of backing Arab militias there. The text does not mention the word "sanctions," the radio says. In mass-circulation provincial daily "Kleine Zeitung, editor Ernst Heinrich writes that although political pressure on the regime in Sudan has been growing during the last few days, President Omar al Bashir "remains unfazed. He knows well that UN sanctions would not affect him, but only the people." For decades, the strongmen in Sudan have been treating the Darfur region like all the other peripheral regions of the country: as a source of raw materials. The people in this region - African ethnic groups - are merely a hindrance to this exploitation. In addition, there is the fact that Sudan, like so many African states, is an artificial construction of the British Empire, which forced together what did not fit together. Sudan is divided - there is the Arab-Islamist culture on the one hand, and on the other, African culture shaped by animist and Christian traditions. This conflict is more likely than sanctions to lead to the eventual breakdown of the regime in Khartoum, the editor believes. Yet another problem, Heinrich criticizes, is that the regime "offers favorable conditions to international corporations and finds willing partners all over the globe. The genocide in Darfur has not changed that."

Brown

NNNN

UNCLASSIFIED